

**THE IMPACT OF REGIONALIZED  
POLICE CANINES IN THE SOUTH BAY  
BY THE YEAR 2003**

**Lieutenant Dale Reissig  
Manhattan Beach Police Department**

**Command College Class 25  
Peace Officer Standards and Training  
Sacramento, California**

**May 1998**

## Introduction

As we approach the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, law enforcement officials must evaluate their methods of delivering the best possible police services to their community while examining innovative approaches to suppress and prevent crime in their jurisdiction. Hand in hand with this task, leaders of police organizations are continually faced with funding issues.

The Manhattan Beach Police Department is like many other law enforcement agencies in the state. We are committed to delivering the highest level of service to our community, while continually searching for and examining new and innovative methods to deliver these services.

One solution to funding issues facing law enforcement agencies is regionalization. In areas where agencies already have established relationships and work closely on a daily basis, the concept of regionalization has already occurred. It makes sense to combine resources to attack common problems. California cities have, under existing law, enormous freedom to cooperate with each other to advance their purposes and exercise their common powers.<sup>1</sup> In Los Angeles, an area known as the South Bay has seen regionalization emerge in the form of a DUI Task Force, a narcotics task force known as L.A.Impact and a

South Bay Training Committee. Additionally, four South Bay cities belong to a regionalized Police/Fire E911 dispatch consortium.

### Background

This issue will be examined on its importance to the Manhattan Beach Police Department. A study of trends and events forms the basis of a futures related scenario that depicts a possible future for a regionalized police canine unit in the year 2003. A strategic plan and transition management plan will be proposed that could make the future a reality. Leadership implications and recommendations will conclude the article.

### Historical Development

The use of K-9 units in law enforcement has evolved greatly since the development of the first K-9 teams in the early 1900's.<sup>2</sup> In 1958, the first police service dog program was introduced to the United States in Baltimore, Maryland through the efforts of Patrick Cahil, a retired London canine instructor.<sup>3</sup> Through the early 1960's, police canine units started appearing on the west coast.

In the mid 1970's, the Inglewood Police Department was the first South Bay city to deploy police canines in patrol. In 1978, the Redondo Beach Police Department began to field police canine units. Their image

and impact on street crime caused several other departments to take notice.

In 1981, the Manhattan Beach Police Department formed a police canine unit. Two officers were selected for canine service and the first two police canines were purchased. Handlers and canines were trained as a team and returned to the department for street duty. Like other departments, the canine units were assigned to field operations and responded to calls for service in Manhattan Beach. Between calls for service, each canine team was responsible for daily training activities to keep their canine partners at peak efficiency. By 1983, the department added a third canine team.

Other departments followed suit, and the number of canine units grew in the South Bay. As the number of canine units increased, so did the number of incidents where canines were utilized to search for and find criminals. Training techniques and methods of deployment were very similar amongst South Bay agencies. There were only a few providers of police canines during this time and their philosophies were passed on to the handlers during training sessions.

During the 1980's, most canines were utilized primarily for handler protection and deployed to search for and find criminals who fled from police. In this arena, the canines excelled. However, canine liability was starting to emerge as a new term. Up to this time, most police agencies followed what was referred to as a "find and hold" policy. Dogs were trained to bite the suspect and hold firm with their teeth. Lawsuits and other bad publicity prompted a shift to "find and bark" policies, whereby canines are trained to find the suspect and bark at his location.<sup>4</sup>

By the 1990's, many police departments were examining the cost and risk associated with maintaining a canine unit. Some departments found it too expensive to purchase new canines, specially outfit a vehicle and provide the necessary levels of training to keep their department out of court. Other departments experienced significant judgments over canine deployments stemming from injuries to suspects. Sometimes, there were lawsuits even when the apprehensions were good.<sup>5</sup> While some departments let their canine programs close down or decided against filling vacant positions, others examined cross training their canines for multiple tasks. The most common of which was narcotics detection. Narcotic cross training became popular among departments that had local narcotics units or participated in task forces. The ability of the canine to detect narcotics greatly aided investigators during a search. Sending

canines to assist during the service of a search warrant to sniff out drugs also became very profitable for some agencies during a time when asset forfeitures were viewed as a source of revenue.

What began as a trend to increase officer safety, reduce crime and catch criminals turned into a tool that has some administrators examining their worth. As the 1990's close, several departments are re-evaluating their canine units. Some have been eliminated due to budget reductions. Others have been reduced in size as other department needs are evaluated and staffed. This has caused the remaining canine units to leave their primary jurisdiction more often to assist allied agencies. A review of canine deployments within the Manhattan Beach Police Department has shown an increase in mutual aid calls to other jurisdictions.<sup>6</sup> While this can be positive for the individual canine team, it can have a negative impact on department staffing levels.

Regionalization of Police Canine Units is one solution to these problems. Rather than having each department fund and staff a canine unit with one or more teams to patrol their individual city on a limited basis, each department would contribute staff and/or funding to operate a regional unit that could provide a greater spectrum of coverage and services to each community.

Regionalization is not a new concept. Based on the experiences of South Bay agencies, it is a viable law enforcement solution tailored for the future. Additionally, regionalization may create better trained personnel and reflect increased efficiency. In a journal article written by Professor John Kenney from California State University, Long Beach:

“Consolidation of small and medium sized agencies presents an opportunity for innovation, that may alter the structure of police departments and thus improve the quality of delivery of police services.”<sup>7</sup>

### Futures Study

As a component of this project, the author conducted a futures study. The method used to determine the impact of regionalized police canines in the South Bay has been developed utilizing the Nominal Group Technique (NGT). Panel members were selected based on their experience and knowledge of police canines and regionalization issues. The panel consisted of the following members:

- Steve Blades is a lawyer with the firm of Manning Marder & Wolffe. Mr. Blades litigates use of force and police canine issues. Mr. Blades is a former police officer and has been assigned to a regionalized task force during his police career.

- Danny LaMaster is the owner and operator of Master K-9. Mr. LaMaster provides police canines and POST certified training for a number of law enforcement agencies, including the Manhattan Beach Police Department.
- Janey Hall is the Operations Manager for the South Bay Regional Public Communications Authority. Ms. Hall has been employed in a regional communications center for the past 19 years.
- Earl Hupp is the current City Treasurer and is a member of the Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Hupp works for a commercial development firm in Manhattan Beach. Mr. Hupp provided expertise in financial matters as well as being very knowledgeable of local area politics.
- Randy Leaf is a Police Lieutenant with the Manhattan Beach Police Department. Lt. Leaf has been a police officer for 18 years. He coordinates the canine program for the Manhattan Beach Police Department, and is a former K-9 handler.



- Frank Miller is a Police Officer with the Hawthorne Police Department. Ofc. Miller has been a police officer for 14 years and has been assigned as a K-9 handler for the past five years.
- Frank DiBenedetto is a Police Officer with the Manhattan Beach Police Department. Ofc. Dibenedetto was selected as one of the first canine handlers in 1981. He has also been assigned to a regional narcotics task force and is currently assigned as a canine handler for the second time in his career.

Trends and events which could impact the issue were developed, discussed and evaluated by the panel. These trends and events were then utilized by the author to create scenarios which assist in the formulation of a strategic plan.

The panel identified and prioritized the following ten trends as having the greatest impact on the issue:

1. Standardization of policies regarding the use of force, canine training, deployment, selection and utilization of canines.

2. Concern regarding civil litigation and liability over canine deployment and use.
3. Concern from citizens about the perception of public safety, response times to calls for service and criminal activity.
4. Canine training issues - time expended training - vs - availability of a canine team.
5. Public sector replacing private sector as a provider of police canines, training and equipment.
6. The need for appropriate supervision of police canine units and accountability of canine unit records.
7. Officer safety concerns during violent confrontations and suspect searches.
8. Impact of new technologies on police canine use, deployment and training.
9. Competing needs of departments vying for canine resources.

10. Diversification of uses for police canines.

Narcotics detection, bomb detection, search & rescue

The panel identified and prioritized the following ten events as having the greatest impact on the issue:

1. A significant court case that rules against the use of police canines.
2. A video taped/publicized incident depicting a police canine bite.
3. Selection of a new police chief that is philosophically opposed to the use of police canines.
4. City bankruptcy causes Sheriff's Department takeover.
5. An export embargo on police canines is imposed.
6. One of the South Bay cities suffers a significant budget shortfall crisis.

7. Breeders stop supplying suitable canines for police work.
8. One or more South Bay cities suffers the effects of a natural disaster.
9. One or more South Bay cities become “ground zero” for riotous conditions.
10. A canine virus destroys suitable police canine stock.

Following the identification of trends and events, the panel was asked to forecast the probability of each trend and event occurring at five and ten year increments (attachment a and b). A cross-impact analysis was completed to determine the impact that each of the trends and events would have on each other (attachment c).

These forecasts were the foundation for the creation of three scenarios which described possible futures. These scenarios include a pessimistic future view, a surprise free future view and an optimistic future view of a regionalized police canine unit in the South Bay by the year 2003.

## Scenario 1

Officer Zinsmore woke up and made a mental note to himself about how chilly it was this morning. As he rustled his covers to get out of bed, he was pounced upon by "Robby". Normally, he wouldn't have minded, but "Robby" was especially affectionate. Considering the fact that "Robby" weighs about 90 pounds, Officer Zinsmore was less than enthusiastic over the greeting. He muttered something about putting up with this stuff and then thought to himself that he may not have many more of these days. Zinsmore began to wrestle about with "Robby" and thought again how lucky he was to be a canine handler and have "Robby" as his partner. Officer Zinsmore got up and let the German Shepherd outside for breakfast and to romp about while he got ready for work.

After grooming "Robby", Officer Zinsmore gave the command for "Robby" to get into the marked police canine unit. "Robby" took his usual position in the back seat area and looked ready to go to work. Zinsmore was not quite as excited. He knew for some time that he would be pitting "Robby" against a new device that was recently developed for the Justice Department. The new device was touted as being able to seek and locate humans through the use of advanced technology. Zinsmore thought to himself that if the device worked as good as the guys from Justice said it would, that it may replace police canines for field use (T-8). He also knew

that the new Chief was not very supportive of the canine program and might take this opportunity to eliminate the program (E-3).

As Officer Zinsmore pulled his canine unit into the parking lot of the police station, "Robby" got very excited and began to pace about in the back of the car. This always seemed to be one of his favorite times of the day, because he got to go around the station and socialize. This had caused some problems in the past. Like the time "Robby" ate his Sergeant's sandwich just before briefing started. But Zinsmore knew a lot more about his partner now than he did six years ago when the team was paired up. As Zinsmore sat down to briefing, his Sergeant asked if "Robby" was up to the competition today. Zinsmore nodded and told him that they were as ready as they could be. Zinsmore knew that "Robby" was one of the best canines around. He had taken first place during four competitions and placed second in two others. Zinsmore was only a little concerned that "Robby" was showing signs of his age and seemed to move a little slower on these cold days. He had thought about talking to his sergeant about the chances of getting another dog when "Robby" retired, but decided to wait after hearing that their breeder had stopped supplying police canines due to liability concerns (E-7)(T-2).

After briefing, Zinsmore loaded his partner into the car and headed out to the training field. Both the handler and the dog knew this area like the back of their hand, but today's test would be very important. Members from the Justice Department were already present and talking to the Chief as the K-9 team pulled onto the field. Zinsmore could see the technicians huddled around the two polished vans bearing "cold plates". He knew that these guys were the "competition" and they were there to take first place. Zinsmore looked over to his right as "Robby" alerted and barked at his friend and canine counterpart, "Kaya", who was running around the field area. Zinsmore got out of his car and let "Robby" out to run around. The two dogs seemed happy to see each other and started playing. Zinsmore looked over and saw Officer Reynolds. He asked Reynolds if, "they were ready to catch badguys". Reynolds replied, "yeah, let's show these guys from Justice how real trackers work".

About that time, a short man with round glasses walked toward the two handlers. Both dogs stopped playing and started to advance toward the stranger. Almost simultaneously, both canine handlers gave verbal commands to the dogs to stop. The stranger paused, then introduced himself to the officers as Joe Cummings from the Department of Justice. He told them that the test area was ready and wanted to know if they wanted to run their canines through first? Zinsmore said that he would

run "Robby" first, before the area was contaminated. He called for his partner and headed for the test area. They were met by two individuals wearing "judge" badges. Each was carrying a clipboard. Officer Zinsmore recognized one as a former canine handler who judged competitions around the state. The other judge was a stranger to him.

Officer Zinsmore was asked if he and his partner were ready. He nodded and was told that this scenario would entail searching a building and attempting to locate two subjects inside. Zinsmore brought "Robby" to the door and announced loudly that he was sending his dog inside, and anyone inside should give up. Hearing no response, "Robby" was turned loose and given the command "search". "Robby" ran up and down the isles of the big building and turned his head from side to side trying to catch a scent. Suddenly, "Robby" locked onto a scent and ran down a hallway toward an office door. He barked and scratched at the door until Zinsmore arrived and told him to sit. "Robby" complied and waited. Zinsmore announced that he would send the dog inside the office if "he" didn't give up. From inside the office, a voice shouted out, "I give up, I'm coming out". The "suspect" was taken into custody and escorted outside by assisting officers. Zinsmore knew the scenario was not over and told "Robby" to continue to search. "Robby" took off again and stopped in the center of the largest room. He had his nose in the air, but could not



decide on a direction to take. Zinsmore wished that he had more training time to prepare for this event (T-4). He reached into his pocket and pulled out a lighter. He flicked it and watched the flame drift to his right. He put the lighter away and directed "Robby" to the left. The dog sniffed about and started barking in the vicinity of a high storage shelf. After giving an announcement, the second "suspect" surrendered to the officers also. As Zinsmore exited the building, he felt good about the search. He knew that it took awhile, but recalled how much faster it was than when officers searched by hand using flashlights. He looked to his left and observed two Justice Agents holding a box the size of a small TV. He saw that one agent was wearing a helmet with a shield like a helicopter pilot and the other was watching some kind of monitor. At the signal, the agents approached the building and within 45 seconds, announced that one suspect was hiding in an enclosed cabinet in a storage area and a second suspect was hiding inside the cab of a truck in the loading area. Two other agents wearing some kind of special jumpsuit and carrying what looked like "electronic" pistols entered the building. Officer Zinsmore overheard one of the Justice agents explain to the Chief that the suits were made with a new bullet resistant material and the "stun-flash" pistols would disable the suspects. The agent said that the equipment was developed to enhance officer safety during suspect searches (T-7). Within a few minutes, the agents exited with both "suspects". The

"suspects" looked stunned and dazed. The exercise was over in the time that Zinsmore and "Robby" took to make an announcement and cautiously enter the building. Zinsmore overheard the Chief comment about how quickly and safely the search was conducted. He also heard him comment about how much liability was attached to the use and deployment of canine units (T-2).

The Chief walked over to Zinsmore and said, "Guess this stuff really works. If the grant is approved, we will have two of these systems by spring". Zinsmore looked at his partner. "Robby" was wagging his tail and seemed to be smiling. He knew he did a good job. As Zinsmore gave him praise and pats, he knew his partner would be out of a job very soon. As Zinsmore loaded "Robby" into the car, Officer Reynolds walked over. Reynolds saw that Zinsmore was upset and tried to cheer him up by telling him that technology couldn't replace their dogs. Both handlers knew that the chief was going to get his way, and this new technology would be the end of their canine program.

## Scenario 2

It had been a long hot summer for Officer Ramos and his canine partner "Max". The pair had been partnered together for the last four years and they were one of the best K-9 teams around. The past year had

been very busy for the team. They had been called out from home on a number of occasions. As a result, the duo had racked up an impressive number of good “finds” without so much as one bite. This record landed them on the front page of the National Police Canine Digest. Officer Ramos’ program coordinator, Lieutenant Shilling was very proud of the team and had pushed hard to expand the K-9 program. Using his own statistical data, Lieutenant Shilling convinced the Chief and City Council to buy another dog.

Lieutenant Shilling had contacted their trainer to locate and purchase another dog and a new handler had already been selected. Officer Baker had worked hard to become a K-9 handler. He attended many training sessions and had been talking to a number of handlers over the Internet. Officer Ramos did not think that Baker was the best choice, but Lieutenant Shilling seemed intent on giving the dog to Baker. Still, Ramos was a little leery.

Lieutenant Shilling was told by the trainer that there was currently a shortage of good police dogs due to a recent dispute over a new tariff the State Department started charging to import police dogs. This caused an export embargo by a group of countries that traditionally provided police dogs (E-5). Shilling told the trainer to see what he could do to find a

qualified dog. Lieutenant Shilling knew that he had little time to find and purchase a dog because the council had other projects that they wanted to spend money on (T-9). The chief had told him that the main reason they allocated the funds, was because of the citizen support that stemmed from the recent capture of a robbery suspect by Officer Ramos and "Max" (T-3). Shilling decided to contact other vendors who had been advertising police dogs on the Internet. After a few days of sending out e-mail, Shilling received a response from a vendor in another state. By this time the chief was aware of the embargo placed on the exportation of police dogs and had shared his concern regarding a recent court case prohibiting the use of "less qualified" police canines (E-1). At Shilling's urging, he agreed to proceed with the purchase anyway.

When Lieutenant Shilling talked with the out of state vendor, he was pleased to hear that he had two dogs that were represented as being brought into the U.S. just prior to the embargo. The new vendor told Shilling that he was going to be traveling through their township and would bring both dogs for their inspection. One week later, Lieutenant Shilling, Officer Ramos and Officer Baker met with the new vendor. His name was Joe Jackson. Joe said that he had two German Shepherd dogs to show. Shilling and Baker were immediately attracted to one of the dogs. His name was "Rocky".

Joe told the group that “Rocky” was imported from Germany and showed the group a stack of papers written in German. Ramos was leery of Joe. He had talked to their regular trainer who had warned Ramos of forged paperwork from European countries accompanying dogs that were actually bred in Mexico as attack/guard dogs.

When Ramos asked Joe about the background of the dogs, Shilling told him to quiet down, as the paperwork looked good to him. Joe ran “Rocky” through some basic commands and a search exercise. Ramos even agreed that the dog looked pretty good. Officer Ramos inquired about how Joe was going to provide training to Officer Baker if they purchased “Rocky”. Joe said that the regular trainer would have to provide the training. Shilling commented that if the regular trainer did not want to do it, that he and Officer Ramos would train the new team. When Ramos protested, Joe said that he would throw in a week of training with the purchase price of the dog. Shilling seemed satisfied with this agreement and had already been authorized by City Council to enter into a contract if a suitable dog was located. He immediately arranged for payment and Officer Baker took “Rocky” home.

As Ramos had thought, their regular trainer did not want any part of training “Rocky”. The trainer explained to Lieutenant Shilling that he

could not train the new team because he did not provide the dog (T-2). Lieutenant Shilling thought this was a case of hard feelings because the trainer lost a sale. He assumed responsibility for training the new team and ordered Officer Ramos to assist.

Several months had gone by when Officer Ramos contacted his old trainer. By this time, Lieutenant Shilling had terminated their contract with the private vendor and had contracted with the neighboring Sheriff's Department for training. The Sheriff had recently started a training program for police canines in an attempt to generate revenue (T-5), and had been successful in taking away some business from the private vendors. Ramos lamented that they were not receiving the level of training that Baker and "Rocky" needed as a new team. He told the old vendor that he was lucky, because he had five years experience to fall back on. Both shook their heads and hoped that it would work out without any problems. Ramos shared that Officer Baker told them that he was having problems controlling "Rocky" and that the Sheriff's trainers told him to be more assertive with the dog. When Lieutenant Shilling was advised of the problem, he told the officers to stop worrying and reminded them not to document any negative performance issues because it could jeopardize the canine program (T-6).

Two weeks later, Officer Ramos and “Max” responded from home to assist Baker and “Rocky” on an area search for an auto theft suspect. Ramos knew the area where the suspect had fled to. It was a residential area that bordered a large commercial shopping complex. Ramos knew there would be a lot of spectators because it was two o’clock in the afternoon. Upon arrival, he checked with Officer Baker. Baker told him that he thought the perimeter was solid and the suspect was probably still inside. The team devised a plan to break up the area into search grids. They went to their respective areas with back-up officers and began their search.

About twenty minutes into the search, Ramos heard over the radio that the suspect was in custody and the officers were requesting paramedics for a dog bite. Ramos responded to the capture area and immediately observed a TV news crew. He wondered why they were so close to the arrest scene. He then observed Officer Baker struggling to gain control of “Rocky”. One of the assisting officers told Ramos that “Rocky” found the suspect, but would not listen to Baker’s commands. He said that “Rocky” had grabbed and drug the suspect about twenty feet before Baker could get control. When Ramos asked about the news crew, he was told that they had caught the entire thing on film and were broadcasting live (E-2).

That night, Officer Ramos watched the TV coverage of the event. He knew that the incident looked bad and only hinted at the problems that were about to target the canine program and his department.

### Scenario 3

Officer Mullins was excited as he prepared for his shift. He had been looking forward to this day for some time now. This was the day that he and his K-9 partner “Dakota” would start their new assignment. Officer Mullins and “Dakota” had been together as a team for a little over eighteen months assigned to field operations with the Manhattan Beach Police Department. During this time, they had assisted in the successful capture of several criminals in their city and made headlines in the local newspaper after the team found an armed suspect when they were called out by a neighboring city. As Officer Mullins was brushing “Dakota”, he checked the area around “Dakota’s” front paw. He recalled how “Dakota” received the injury on a broken window while searching for looters in a department store during the riots (E-9) last year. Officer Mullins recalled how effective all of the allied agency K-9 teams were when they were centralized and their missions were screened and assigned by Sergeant Hoover. Hoover was a K-9 coordinator from another agency, and was one of the driving forces behind regionalizing local K-9 units.



It seemed natural that the K-9 teams in the South Bay area work in a regionalized unit. Two years prior, the state passed legislation that mandated a standardized policy regarding the deployment, training, selection and utilization of police canines (T-1). Prior to that time, each agency had their own policy manual. Now, there was one policy manual signed by each of the police chiefs in the South Bay. They also updated and incorporated canine use into the mutual aid policy for the region. This last effort was but one response to citizen concerns about their safety, response times to calls for service and criminal activity (T-3). The thinking by the chiefs at the time was to provide the most efficient levels of service to their citizens. At the time, it was recognized how effective police canines were when it came to catching criminal offenders.

Several problems still needed to be overcome. For one, each agency deployed their individual K-9 teams to meet their own needs. This often left gaps when there was no K-9 team available. A team would have to be called from another city. And if there was more than one incident occurring, the competing needs caused some logistical problems (T-9). The mutual aid policy helped expedite the response of K-9 teams to other cities, but still did not resolve the issue of 24/7 coverage in the region.

As Officer Mullins loaded "Dakota" in the K-9 unit and headed for the office, he started thinking about the number of meetings that he attended for the regionalization task force. Officer Mullins knew that Sergeant Hoover and the other K-9 handlers spent many long hours selling the program. There were several issues that had to be overcome before the signature lines were filled though. Interestingly enough, some of the issues and concerns turned out to be supportive of a regionalized unit. As a result of a recently publicized incident depicting a police canine bite of a suspect (E-2), appropriate supervision and records accountability became an issue for departments with police canines (T-6). Mullins recalled that part of Sergeant Hoover's proposal included a centralized canine records section. This computerized centralized records section would be responsible for the accurate review, filing and maintenance of canine action reports. Many chiefs recognized that this standardized system could be of benefit when compared to some of the current records keeping methods. Officer Mullins knew that the new computerized report format would be quicker to complete.

Additionally, the unit was structured to allow for financial participation in lieu of a member agency contributing personnel resources. This issue resolved many concerns. For instance, if a smaller member city could not contribute an officer, dog and car to the unit, they could be

billed for services on as-needed basis. In essence, K-9 units would be available to them, but only when needed. Other member cities that contributed personnel resources would benefit from visible and directed K-9 patrols in their communities. In addition to being a deterrent, the K-9's have a reputation of being well liked. Most of the cities knew this and elected to commit personnel to the program. Mullins also knew that community demonstrations and public relations visits would factor into funding requests and community donations for the unit. He recalled how much fun the South Bay K-9 Competition was last year and hoped for a first place finish again next year. He also knew that the money raised during the event would go a long way toward the purchase of equipment for the unit.

One of the things that Officer Mullins was proud of, was his suggestion that more dogs be trained in narcotics detection. He knew from his experience as a narcotics officer, that a canine was a much better search tool than his partner officers. Mullins had proposed to Sergeant Hoover that a number of the canines in the unit be cross trained in narcotics detection. He proposed that whenever a narcotics trained canine was used to search for and find narcotics, that the unit would then be entitled to a portion of the assets forfeited when the case was cleared.

As Officer Mullins pulled into the parking lot, he observed the new sign that identified the facility as the Regional Police Canine Headquarters. Mullins found a place to park and brought “Dakota” out of the car. He knew that there would be television crews and news media at the site today, so he put a leash on “Dakota” before going inside. Even though Mullins had been through the facility while it was under construction, he was impressed with the way the finished building looked. Inside, there were adequate work areas for the officers to complete reports and conduct business. There was also a classroom to hold on-site training. Officer Mullins noted that he would not miss the 75 mile drive for classroom update training every three months, because the classes would now be held at the new facility. Additionally, Mullins had been selected as a “master trainer” and was scheduled to attend advanced training in the fall. He would then be qualified to train new handlers as they came into the unit, instead of sending the new officers away for six weeks of (expensive) training. This move irritated some of the established training providers, but the member cities recognized that the regional unit could save a lot of money and provide a higher level of training with their new POST approved training course.

Walking down the hallway toward the briefing room, Officer Mullins could hear Sergeant Hoover and the other K-9 teams assembling for duty.

As Officer Mullins picked up his roster, he observed that there would be six teams assigned to work the same shift he was working. He recalled that there were actually the same number of teams working most nights prior to the regional unit being formed, but there were some nights and most days with no dogs on at all. If an agency needed a dog during those shifts, they called one from home and paid overtime. Under the regional concept, K-9 teams were assigned to sectors for patrol twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week and were tied together with a common radio/computer communications system.

Mullins and some of the other handlers knew that some of the street officers were becoming increasingly concerned over the rise in violent and armed confrontations on the street (T-7). The handlers all felt that having K-9 teams available to search for suspects twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week was very important. Mullins knew from experience that he stood a much better chance of capturing a hidden suspect if he could respond to the search scene in a timely manner. Other handlers had shared stories of suspects escaping through perimeters because the K-9 had a long response time when called out from their residence.

After briefing, Officer Mullins talked with some of the other handlers. The conversation focused on the plan to diversify the capabilities of the

teams (T-10). Mullins expressed that he was very anxious to have “Dakota” trained for narcotics detection. He felt that with his experience as a narcotics detective prior to becoming a K-9 handler, that he and “Dakota” would be good in that area. Two of the other handlers talked about when they would be attending training blocks for explosives detection and search and rescue. The latter two training areas were identified as being critical by the member cities since there were several buildings within the South Bay that could be potential “targets” of terrorist bombings. Having canines trained for explosive detection could ultimately save lives in the future. There was also interest in search and rescue training. When the last earthquake struck the South Bay, several large buildings had collapsed and trapped people inside (E-8). During the debriefings that followed the disaster, rescue crews had expressed the need for canines trained for search and rescue work to assist them in the event of another natural disaster.

All of the handlers agreed that the teams would be used more with the additional training. As the group broke up to go to work, Mullins and “Dakota” headed for the new training field. This area had been specially constructed at the headquarters training facility for canine training. There were obstacle courses, structures and two small fields adjacent to a small wooded area. Mullins had suggested that the next canine competition be

held at the new facility. He knew that overwhelming support from citizen groups would continue to make the event better, which might encourage greater citizen sponsorship of canine activities.

As Officer Mullins looked at his watch, he noted that he had one hour to train with one of the other K-9 teams. They had devised their schedule to maximize canine availability while ensuring that each team trained on a regular basis. Mullins recalled that in the past, all of the K-9 teams would gather at least one day a week and train for six hours. He used to complain that there was too much down time during training, and remembered how his patrol sergeant used to yell at him about not being available for radio calls. Now, it seemed that training mandates were being met and there were still an adequate number of K-9 teams on the street (T-4).

After training, Officer Mullins loaded "Dakota" into their unit and advised the dispatcher that they were available. As Mullins drove out of the parking lot, he thought to himself about how much sense this regionalized canine unit concept made and wondered why some of the decision makers in the early nineties did not come up with the idea themselves.

## Strategic Planning

The development of a strategic plan should include decisions about priorities, objectives, resources, activities and performance measures.<sup>8</sup> External, internal and stakeholder assessments must be completed prior to the formation of key strategies and implementation planning.

Regionalization of any law enforcement effort is a large task. Not only is each agency involved, but each city government and their represented community affected. In order to orchestrate a project of this nature, a solid core planning group representing each agency should be selected to develop the priorities and objectives of the program. Once this task is completed, the program priorities and objectives must be discussed and agreed to by the immediate stakeholders. This endeavor itself will be critical to the success of a regionalized canine program. Hidden agendas and unclear concepts must be unearthed, addressed and resolved before the plan can move forward. Cooperation and overwhelming support are key ingredients to ensure success and forward progress.

Once the project is underway, the planning group would develop a comprehensive proposal of tasks and assignments. This could be broken into components that identify current capabilities as well as proposed



training objectives tied to expanded future tasks and program responsibilities.

The planning group would be responsible for evaluating available resources and make recommendations concerning potential and/or projected future resources. This would include personnel and financial commitments from each agency.

Upon completion of these tasks, the planning group would finalize performance measures for the unit and ensure that the needs of the customers and accomplishment of the mission needs are identified and adopted.

A critical component of the strategic plan will include an assessment of the internal environment. In this case, there are several environments that are affected by this proposal. This can add to the complexity of the process, but should not be viewed as overwhelming. A clear vision of the proposed future will be the beacon that illuminates the path. Each agency will have internal issues to contend with. Some will be shared with other agencies and some will be unique to one or two. Because this unit would be newly created, management of the unit and the methodology employed for the personnel selection process will be given a great amount of

scrutiny. Fairness and strict adherence to an established selection criteria will ease tensions and concerns within each agency. Agency support for police canine programs is another component for consideration. Of the involved proposed agencies, support for police canines is still apparent. Those that have abandoned canine programs have done so for reasons other than a lack of support. The opportunity to provide canine coverage twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week with a regionalized canine program is very appealing and serves as a strong internal motivator. Most if not all of the affected agencies are currently, or in the past have participated in regional task forces. Combine this experience with a strongly supported mutual aid agreement in the South Bay, and you find an environment that is supportive of officers from different agencies working together. Economic concerns need to be addressed during an internal assessment, as well as during the external assessment. Each agency faces the escalating costs of maintaining a canine unit. Regionalization of police canines will reduce the overall number of canines currently working in the South Bay. However, a regionalized police canine unit can provide greater levels of coverage to each city and potentially reduce costs at the same time.

An external assessment of police canines would be incomplete without a discussion about liability. Civil suits against law enforcement resulting from K-9 bites are not uncommon.<sup>9</sup> Proper organization and management of the unit is the key to reducing the risk of being sued. Proper selection, strict training guidelines and supervision should contribute toward the accomplishment of this goal. Shared responsibility in the event of a suit is a possibility with a regionalized unit. Utilizing existing guidelines for similar units should address this external concern. There will certainly be political barriers that will need to be addressed. Strong internal support will prove to be a positive factor to overcome these issues as they arise. Additionally, control and governance issues will need to be addressed as they present themselves.

The final area of analysis examines stakeholders. Each city government and their elected officials will be examining what impact a regionalized canine program will have on their community. Of paramount concern will be service to their respective communities, costs and liability. Each police chief will look at the proposed unit to determine effectiveness, efficiency and ability to deliver enhanced levels of service to the community. Police chiefs will also examine the impact on personnel within their agency. Each community and its residents will expect an increased perception of safety, reduced levels of crime and will share some

concerns about cost. Undoubtedly, each police association that represents current and aspiring canine handlers will seek to participate in the process of forming a regionalized unit. Police officer associations may also manifest themselves as a snaildarter during the process. Early involvement and participation by these groups may eliminate issues and concerns as the process evolves.

### Transition Management

In any change there is always a future state - a place or condition one wishes to achieve; a present state - the current condition in relation to the desired state; and a transition state - the getting from the present state to the desired state: the period during which the actual change takes place.<sup>10</sup> Once the decision to implement a particular strategy is made, a sound transition plan must be developed. The most desirable scenario is one that creates the least amount of stress, remains consistent throughout the process and resolves conflict.

For a project of this magnitude, commitment must be made by each involved agency to provide qualified, interested personnel that have the authority to make agency commitments and have demonstrated the ability to work through complicated projects with other groups. Once this core transition group is established, they will be faced with a multitude of

tasks. Utilizing components of the strategic plan, the transition team will be responsible for the design of a regional canine program. As the project moves forward, there may become a need for other “sub-groups”. For example, it may become apparent that input is required from a panel of outside experts. In that instance, the use of sub-committees to explore technology issues, legal issues and governance issues might be beneficial. Once the “future state” is defined, it will be imperative for the transition team to devise a plan of action to get to that point. This will serve as the road map to reach the “desired state”.

Communication with stakeholders will build commitment for the plan and help address and resolve issues as they present themselves. This point cannot be overstated enough. Creating a new unit inside of a police agency creates challenges. When a regional unit is being formed, open and honest lines of communication are critical for successful implementation to occur. If one group is not included in the transition plan, unresolved issues can manifest themselves at the most inopportune times. Current lines of communication that exist can be used as a foundation. Because of the number of agencies involved, new methods of communicating may need to be developed through the use of available technologies. These communication channels would then be utilized to

communicate from the beginning of the process, and continue while progress is made through implementation of the project.

Patience is a term not commonly discussed when planning begins. Enthusiasm and high levels of energy are usually the norm. It will be important for the transition team to incorporate patience into their daily routines. When success depends on approval and commitment from several governing bodies, patience will be required.

Selling or marketing the plan will be a critical component of a successful transition plan. Examples of successful marketing strategies are in place in many of the existing organizations. The transition team should take advantage of these strategies and employ them during their presentations.

There are many advantages of a regional canine unit. The challenge for the transition management team will be in their ability to demonstrate how this strategy will benefit the operations of each of the involved agencies.

### Implications on Leadership

The most challenging implications of this issue on law enforcement leadership revolve around cooperation, trust, risk and commitment.

A program of this complexity cannot function in an environment that does not have a high level of cooperation. Each agency must work in a cooperative manner to ensure success. The level of cooperation will undoubtedly be challenged as individual agencies or governing bodies change, review their individual needs or involve themselves in political highjinx.

Each of the critical stakeholders must develop trust for the other members. This is not to insinuate that blind faith will lead to a successful operation. Instead, it is meant to imply that strong working relationships should be developed early in the process. From these relationships should spring a level of trust and respect. This will form the basis of a strong team that can successfully guide the project through implementation. Clear communications among stakeholders is mandatory. While this may seem like a highly optimistic view, it is a critical component of a successful plan. The Manhattan Beach Police Department has earned the trust of the community. Maintaining that trust is of paramount concern. Any loss of trust would jeopardize this program and certainly impact others.

Risk is assessed in different ways. Each governing body should conduct a risk assessment prior to making a commitment to the proposed program. Each police chief will evaluate the risk of participating with other agencies in this endeavor. Each canine handler will need to evaluate the risks involved with working in several cities with other officers. And the members of each community will determine their levels of comfort. The answers to these questions are important and thought provoking. The responsibility of law enforcement leaders is to provide reasonable responses, reduce the risks and evaluate the program regularly.

Commitment will determine success or failure of a regional canine program. Therefore, it is imperative that each and every participating member commit themselves 100% to the concept. Anything less than that, could ultimately result in failure. It will be important for each participant to regularly renew their commitment to the program to ensure ongoing success.

### Recommendations

Throughout the course of conducting this futures study, the author had an opportunity to study the issue and interact with a group of experts



during the NGT process. As a result of this work, several recommendations can be presented as a basis for further discussion.

1. Establish an advisory group to examine the feasibility of applying the concepts of this futures study to the present state.
2. Upon completion of task one, convene a series of meetings with key stakeholders to elicit their commitment and cooperation.
3. Develop a mission statement that will serve as a catalyst and provide vision for the project.
4. Establish clear written guidelines that detail the governance and management of a regional canine unit.
5. Develop clear written operational guidelines and funding guidelines for a regional canine unit. Included in this phase of the project, should be a presentation concerning all available funding alternatives.
6. Develop selection and deployment criteria for a regional canine unit.

7. Utilizing components of the strategic and transition plan presented in this futures study, develop an implementation plan to accomplish the task.

### Follow-up and Evaluation

The development of performance indicators will be beneficial in conducting an analysis to determine how the program is working. Capturing search and find data, arrest statistics and response times to calls for service are but a few of the tools that would be available to monitor and evaluate a regional canine program. Survey tools designed to solicit citizen reactions and comments would provide an opportunity to measure any changes in the public's perception of safety. All of this information will provide the basis for a clear before and after view of the program.

### Conclusions

Law enforcement leaders constantly search for solutions and concepts that will improve on the method of delivering services to their communities. Regionalization of police canines is one solution that can maximize resources and provide enhanced levels of service to the community. This futures study is important to the Manhattan Beach

Police Department because it is able to explore possible future alternatives that could reallocate department funds for other programs, increase officer safety and make a positive impact on crime in our community.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Furth, Wayne S., Melching, Jeffrey T. "Existing Legal Framework for Intergovernmental Cooperation" Western City, June 1996
- <sup>2</sup> Resch, Randall C. "K-9s in Law Enforcement: They're Worth the Effort." Police, February 1997
- <sup>3</sup> Zwickey, Jared. "Is there a Future for the Police Canine." California Commission on POST, Project 3-0049, 1987
- <sup>4</sup> Savage, David. "Necessary Weapon, or Excessive Force?" Los Angeles Times, February 29, 1996
- <sup>5</sup> Strandberg, Keith W. "Canine Units." Law Enforcement Technology, September 1997
- <sup>6</sup> Manhattan Beach Police Department Monthly Reports on Canine Activities 1996-1997
- <sup>7</sup> Kenny, John P., Adams, Gary B. "Consolidation of Police Services: An Opportunity for Innovation." Journal of Police Sciences and Administration, Vol. 104
- <sup>8</sup> Esensten, Tom. Command College Class 25, Session 6, November 1997
- <sup>9</sup> Hawley, Donna L. "K-9 Bite Liability is a Growing Concern." Police, February 1997
- <sup>10</sup> Beckhard, Richard, Harris, Reuben T. "Organizational Transitions." Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1987

## TREND SUMMARY TABLE

	<b>-5 yrs</b>	<b>TODAY</b>	<b>+5 yrs</b>	<b>+10 yrs</b>	<b>Concern (1-10)</b>
<b>T 1</b>	45	<b>100</b>	117	214	1
<b>T 2</b>	64	<b>100</b>	136	213	2
<b>T 3</b>	78	<b>100</b>	130	161	3
<b>T 4</b>	81	<b>100</b>	177	212	4
<b>T-5</b>	27	<b>100</b>	119	223	5
<b>T-6</b>	56	<b>100</b>	137	226	6
<b>T-7</b>	74	<b>100</b>	111	181	7
<b>T-8</b>	26	<b>100</b>	149	214	8
<b>T-9</b>	79	<b>100</b>	171	164	9
<b>T-10</b>	70	<b>100</b>	122	177	10

(attachment A)

## EVENT SUMMARY TABLE

	yr. >0	+5 yrs	+10 yrs	Impact (1-10)
<b>E 1</b>	4.5	75%	97%	-7
<b>E 2</b>	4	59%	98%	-8.5
<b>E 3</b>	4	76%	81%	-2
<b>E 4</b>	4.4	19%	43%	-8.5
<b>E 5</b>	4.2	11%	22%	-6
<b>E-6</b>	4.2	47%	64	-5.5
<b>E-7</b>	4.5	36%	56	-6.2
<b>E-8</b>	4	64%	96	+2.4
<b>E-9</b>	4	66%	95	-1
<b>E-10</b>	4.5	16%	29	-7.8

(attachment B)

## CROSS IMPACT ANALYSIS TABLE

	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4	T-5	T-6	T-7	T-8	T-9	T-10
E-1	+2	+3			-3	+4	-4	+3		+2
E-2	+5	-5	-3	-5		+3	-2	+1	-1	+2
E-3	+4	+5	+2	-3		-2	-2	+2	-1	-2
E-4	+3	+2	-3		-5		-2	-1	+1	+2
E-5			-4		+1		-3	+3	-3	+3
E-6			-2	-3	+1	-2	-3	-3		-3
E-7	-1		-2		+3		-3	+4		+3
E-8	+2	-1				+2	+3	+3	-2	+5
E-9	+2	-1	+3	-2		+3	+3	-2	-2	+3
E-10			-2		+1		-2	+4	-3	-2

Legend:

-5    to    +5

1 = Least impact

5 = Greatest impact

(attachment C)